

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9940

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9460

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (E.O. CATEGORY)

FOLLOWING MESSAGE CALCUTTA 1599 RECEIVED NEW DELHI 14 JUL 75
BEING REPEATED YOUR ACTION

QUOTE

E.O. 11652 GDS-4

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: TALK WITH C.R. IRANI OF THE STATESMAN

1. DURING CONGEN'S JULY 4TH RECEPTION C.R. IRANI, MANAGING
DIRECTOR OF THE STATESMAN ASKED CONOFF TO CALL ON HIM. BECAUSE
IRANI IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE OPPOSITION WE WERE NOT ANXIOUS TO TAKE
UP THIS INVITATION BUT WHEN IRANI'S SECRETARY SUBSEQUENTLY
CALLED SUGGESTING A MEETING "AS SOON AS CONVENIENT" WE FELT
THAT IN VIEW OF CONCULATES
LONG TERM STANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM WE SHOULD NOT SEEM TO BE
CUTTING HIM OFF. IRANI AND CONOFF MET JULY 11TH AT HIS OFFICE AT
THE STATESMAN. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
CONVERSATION (MEMCON FOLLOWS).

2. PRESS CENSORSHIP: IRANI SAID THAT PRESS CENSORSHIP WAS
RELATIVELY MILD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EMERGENCY WITH PAPERS ABLE
TO EVADE THROUGH SUBTERFUGE SOME OF THE REGULATIONS. NOW THE
CENSORS HAVE BECOME STRICTER, MORE SO IN NEW DELHI THAN CALCUTTA,
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AND ARE OPERATING UNDER VERY STRICT GUIDELINES. HE GAVE A COPY

OF THE CENSORSHIP GUIDELINES TO THE CONOFF (BEING POUCHED TO THE EMBASSY). IN REPLY TO CONOFF'S QUESTION IRANI SAID THAT PAPERS ARE ALLOWED TO PRINT STORIES ABOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS ALMOST COMPLETELY WITHOUT CENSORSHIP. STORIES ABOUT THE CIA HE SAID ARE PRINTED ACCORDING TO THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK OF THE PAPER. IRANI SAID AS FAR AS HE KNOWS THE GOI NEITHER ENCOURAGES NBS DISCOURAGES STORIES ABOUT THE CIA EVEN THOUGH ITEM NO. 17 OF GUIDELINES TO CENSOR OFFICERS STATES "NOTHING TO BE PUBLISHED WHICH IS LIKELY TO AFFECTS INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES."

3. IRANI SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT CENSORSHIP WHICH "CUTS THE LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS" HE IS GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO PRINTING AN UNDERGROUND NEWS PAPER. HE SAID THAT HE MIGHT DO THIS DESPITE THE FACT THA AN "ARREST WARRANT NOW HANGS OVER MY HEAD" AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE, IF IT COULD, TO CATCH HIM IN OVERT DEFIANCE OF PRESENT REGULATIONS.

4. IN DESCRIBING THE EVENTS WHICH LED UP TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IRANI FELT STRONGLY THE DECREES WERE NOT RPT NOT DIRECTED AGAINST THE OPPOSITION PARTIES BUT AGAINST A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF MRS. GANDHI'S OWN CONGRESS PARTY WHO WANTED HER TO RESIGN AFTER THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT DECISION. HE WAS CAUSTIC IN DESCRIBING MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY AS CORRUPT, UNADVENTUREOUS TYPES WHO REGARDLESS OF PAST FEELINGS WILL NOW FOLLOW MRS. GANDHI. IRANI EXPECTED THAT MRS. GANDHI WILL REMAIN IN POWER FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.

5. SUPREME COURT RULING: PRESSURE, IRANI SAID, IS BEING PLACED ON THE CHIEF JUSTICE A.N. ROY BY MRS. GANDHI'S ADHERENTS. IT IS THE GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT THIS PRESSURE IS COUNTER PRODUCTIVE AND IRANI BELEIVES THAT THE SUPREME COURT WILL FIND AGAINST MRS. GANDHI IF IT IS ALLOWED TO HEAR THE CASE.

6. SNAJAY GANDHI: MRS'S SON, IRANI SAID, IS CRUEL, ARROGANT, VICIOUS AND CORRUPT BUT NOW HE IS ONE OF THE MOST UNFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN THE GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING PROCESS. IRANI DESCRIBES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHER AND SON AS A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP AND COULD SEE NO GOOD COMING FROM ANY ADVICE WHICH SANJAY OFFERS.

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7. FUTURE PLANS: IRANI PLANS AT THE END OF JULY TO LEAVE FOR MOSCOW TO NEGOTIATE FOR NEWSPRINT. FROM THERE HE WILL GO TO LONDON WHERE HE SAID HE INTENDS TO SPEAK TO UK FOREIGN OFFICE, PRESS ASSOCIATIONS IN LONDON AND ANYONE ELSE WHO WILL LISTEN ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN INDIA. HE SAID HE MIGHT, IF TIME PERMITS TRY AND VISIT THE UNITED STATES FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.

8. COMMENT: IRANI BELIEVES THAT MRS. GANDHI HAS "PERMANENTLY
DERAILED DEMOCRACY" SOLELY SO THAT SHE CAN REMAIN IN POWER. HE
SEES HIMSELF AS THE GUARDIAN OF THE FREE PRESS IN INDIA AND ONE
OF THE FEW WITH THE COURAGE AND INTELLIGENCE TO OPPOSE HER.
KORN

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